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## The Bloomfield Citizen.

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THE JOHN FREEMAN SHOE COMPANY.

Brief Sketch of a New Industry, about  
to Start in Bloomfield.

The naming of leather ranks among the  
most important of the pioneer industries  
of Essex County. In the latter part of  
the last century and early part of the  
present, a number of tanneries were in  
operation in Orange and vicinity. The  
manufacturing of the products of the  
tanneries into boots and shoes was a  
natural sequence. Capital was invested  
as early as 1785, antedating by about five  
years the tailoring industry for which that  
town has since become famous. The new  
industry prospered and by 1820 Orange  
was equally famous as a shoe mart as it  
is now for hats. The John Freeman Shoe  
Company, an Orange institution about to  
locate in Bloomfield, has a history that is  
closely allied with the history of the shoe  
trade in this country. This concern was  
started in 1811 by Jabez Freeman. It  
was located on Main Street opposite Grace  
Church, two blocks distant from their  
present site. Mr. Freeman continued in  
the business until the time of his death,  
which occurred in 1827. In 1840 Mr. Fre  
eman associated his sons John and Peter  
in business with him, and, after a few years,  
the John Freeman Co. subsequently  
developed. This concern is the only  
surviving one of the numerous shoe  
factories in operation in Orange prior to 1850. The concern has experienced many  
vicissitudes since 1811 and the policy  
pursued by this company in adapting its  
methods and products to the needs of  
the times, has been the cause of its success  
and continued career.

In the primitive days of the shoe  
industry the custom of giving out work  
prevailed. In addition to the men  
employed steadily at the factory, the  
Freemans furnished work to a great  
many shoemakers dwelling in South  
Orange, Bloomfield, Montclair, and  
 Caldwell, who took their work to their  
homes, returning it to the factory when  
it was completed. The business con  
tinued prosperously in Orange until 1860,  
when a serious depression came, chiefly  
caused by the discordant relations  
between the north and the south. The  
Orange trade being largely a southern  
trade, suffered from the strained relation  
between the two sections of the country.  
With the advent of war came a great  
demand for army shoes and the business  
rapidly revived. The pressing demand  
for their class of goods necessitated their  
rapid manufacture and as the present  
perfected machinery was not then in  
vogue, the system of working by teams  
was developed. The Freeman Company  
lays claim to the manufacturing of the  
first pair of army shoes made under the  
team system in this State.

With the close of the war, the business  
again declined rapidly in Orange. While  
continuing to supply the United States  
Government with large quantities of shoe  
material, the company turned its attention  
to making a specialty of gentlemen's fine  
shoes.

They have achieved a remarkable  
success in this line. The adoption of the  
latest and most improved machinery  
used in the manufacture of shoes has  
their steadily increasing business, has  
rendered their present quarters too  
small for them. There being no possibility  
of enlarging their present place of  
business the Company was forced to look  
about for a more commodious building  
and were negotiating for the Harrison  
Street Block in East Orange, when their  
attention was called to the vacant build  
ings of the Polkobet Organ Company in  
Bloomfield. One of these buildings was  
immediately secured.

The building purchased is located on  
the west side of Orange street, about three  
minutes walk from the D. L. & W. R.  
Depot at Waterson, and about five  
minutes walk from the Orange & Bloom  
field and Newark & Bloomfield street  
railways. The building is a two story  
frame, with lofty attics. Its present  
dimensions are 100 feet x 37, but it is  
understood that it is the intention of the  
Company to build a 25-foot extension  
on the east end. The structure is a sub  
stantial and of attractive appearance,  
having been originally built for office and  
warehouses occupied by the Organ Com  
pany. This Organ Company immediately  
put a force of men to work re  
painting the building and making the  
necessary alterations. It is their intent  
to make the new factory 25 feet longer  
than the old, so as to give ample room  
for the increased facilities of the new  
factory. It is anticipated that the  
new factory will be considerably  
increased.

The business of the Freeman Company  
is done directly with the retail men.  
They do a large western and southern  
trade, but what will perhaps seem strange  
when the fame of Massachusetts as a

shoe-producing centre is considered,  
Boston is one of the principal markets for  
this Company's goods, and the other New  
England cities buy in large quantities.  
Walter S. Freeman, well known to this  
town, who has served as Town Com  
mittee-man and in other public capacities,  
is president of the new industry, which  
is welcomed to Bloomfield with the wish  
that it may successfully continue on its  
time-honored and prosperous career.

Literary Partnerships.

Collaboration in novel writing is get  
ting to be quite a common occurrence,  
writes James Payn in The Independent.  
A man does the plot and the other  
the dialogue or descriptive scenes,  
surely a little dangerous in the case of  
such sensitive natures), a lady is intro  
duced into the partnership, to do the  
lovescenes from her view of the question.  
Men are apt to make mistakes in  
this matter, and vice versa. The  
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